



News Release

WISCONSIN ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Joint Force Headquarters ▪ 2400 Wright Street ▪ Madison WI ▪ 53704

November 9, 2010

Contact: Lt. Col. Jackie Guthrie

Office: 608-242-3050 or Cell: 608-516-1777

NEWS: Veterans Day message from the Adjutant General of Wisconsin

I recently had the honor of representing Wisconsin's Soldiers and Airmen at the [Green Bay Packers military appreciation night](#) and as we waited for the festivities to begin music blasted from the sound system, "...tonight's going to be a good, good night..." And a good night it was. In fact, it was a superb night for the fans and for our beloved Packers who played superbly in defeating the Cowboys. But it was also a good, good night for the home team. For our team.

As we know, Veterans Day was originally known as Armistice Day, and it commemorates the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918 when a temporary end to fighting — an armistice — silenced the bloody battlefields of World War I months before the Treaty of Versailles officially ended the "war to end all wars." President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the first U.S. observation of Armistice Day on Nov. 11, 1919 to remember the sacrifice made by veterans of that conflict as well as to celebrate the peace that followed.

Of course, World War I was not to be the end of warfare for the United States or the rest of the world. In 1938, as the shadows of World War II drew near, Congress set Nov. 11 aside as a legal holiday dedicated to the cause of world peace. It was not until 1954 that Armistice Day was changed to Veterans Day to recognize not only the veterans of "the Great War" but of all American military conflicts.

And the Green Bay Packers did just that by dedicating the Nov. 7 game to veterans, to the men and women who serve, or have served, as a member of the United States Armed Forces. While unable to host Wisconsin's more than 400,000 veterans, the Packers did honor generations past and present.

Kicking off pre-game festivities was the honorable Dr. Joseph Westphal, undersecretary of the Army, accompanied by several of our nation's wounded warriors from Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Also recognized was highly decorated [World War II veteran James "Maggie" Magellas](#), who served with the historic 82nd Airborne Division, accompanied by Col. Martin Schweitzer, the 82nd's deputy commander for operations, as well as a division honor guard.

It was especially touching to me when some of our newest combat veterans, the Soldiers of the 951st "Sapper" Engineer Company, marched on the field and unfurled our nation's colors as our currently deployed Soldiers of the [147th Aviation Battalion sang the National Anthem](#) via video.

Whether currently deployed in support of Operation New Dawn, or just returning from Operation Enduring Freedom — these men and women represent the more than 17,000 Wisconsin Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen that have joined the ranks of veterans since Sept. 11, 2001.

But it was the halftime show that left me speechless as the Packers continued the dedication to not only current veterans but those that never made it home. I was privileged to escort the family of fallen National Guard Soldier Sgt. Ryan Adams, representing the too many service members who have made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country. We joined Dr. Westphal on the field with Brig. Gen. Mark Anderson, the commander of our Wisconsin Army National Guard and some very special guests — two of our wounded warriors.

The veterans in attendance stood to be honored and from the Packers' tunnel out marched the more than 100 Soldiers of the 951st Engineer Company, led by their commander in combat, Capt. Brian Barth. And the fans cheered. It wasn't a polite cheer — it was a crescendo that grew louder as more Soldiers emerged from the tunnel.

I was moved by the appreciation shown by the Packers and their fans for these veterans. It was sincere and appropriate for the sacrifices made by these young men and all of our nation's veterans. And as I stood there, the words of Elmer Davis echoed in my mind — "this nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave." Our freedom is preserved by warriors such as this.

On Nov. 11, please join me in remembering our veterans — men and women who have sacrificed for our nation's freedom. Let us remember our National Guard, with more than 524,000 new Army and Air Guard veterans nationally since 9-11, who join our brothers and sisters in arms from the active duty and federal reserve in serving so valiantly today. They preserve the torch of freedom handed to them by veterans like "Maggie" Magellas and the thousands of Veterans who served in Korea and Vietnam.

What a legacy. What a team. Sunday night was a good, good night for the home team. Let's make Thursday a good, good day for our other team — our national home team — our veterans. Let us remember and honor them.

- 30 -

[Story online](#)

[Related story](#)

[Current News Releases and Media Galleries](#)